MELODY DIVINE

By BELLE MANIATES

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Edith Wilmot looked into the open fire, whose soft glow intensified her clear cut features and softened the meditative restraint in her beautiful eyes. It was the night of her return home after an enforced absence abroad of six years, which time had been devoted to the care of an invalid father. Since his death had occurred, two years before, she had aimlessly traveled and visited, until now she had decided to open her old home, so long closed.

On Arnold Graves, organist of St. Paul's and teacher of piano, her young girlish fancy had centered its dreams. The two hours spent weekly under his tutelage before she had gone abroad had been very happy ones to her. She had met her teacher of music socially, and their friendship had been fast merging into a closer relation when fate had intervened in the shape of the family physician, who had ordered Mr. Wilmot to Switzerland, where their sojourn had been prolonged beyond their original plans.

Edith had carried on a spasmodic correspondence with Arnold Graves; but, owing to his sensitiveness, her natural restraint and the lack of propinquity, their relations had not changed.

Constantly on her journey home had come the question to her mind whether he would find in the woman of twenty-six what had seemed to please him in the girl of twenty. She had written to him en route and asked him to call that evening. He had done so, and now, after his departure, she sat before the fire musing on their meeting.

She had in these years sometimes feared lest her girlish inexperience had read him wrong and invested him with qualities that lived only in her own fancy. She thought she would almost prefer not to meet him again than to suffer the loss of her illusions. But now her broadened nature and wider experience found him to be all she had thought him—and more. She knew, too, that her youthful feeling for him had quickly and suddenly become something else—something that was stronger for its long duration. She never had felt quite sure of the place she occupied in his thoughts and feelings, but tonight she had seen a strange light in his eyes when he looked at her. Perchance the expression had been there in the days long ago and she had been too ignorant to translate it.

She had pursued her musical studies while abroad, and Arnold had asked her to come to his studio the next morning and play to him. She went at the appointed hour, and after playing a few selections there suddenly entered a most beautiful young girl.

"Miss Wilmot," introduced Graves, "let me present my ward and pupil, Miss Beth Forbes. I want you to hear her sing," he explained to Edith.

Then, turning to the girl, he asked her to go into the adjoining room and look for a certain aria.

He had written casually of a distant cousin who had been left to his guardianship, but she had supposed his ward to be a mere child. Beth returned with the music. So charmingly did she render the aria that Edith felt her heart going out to her, though with conflicting sensations. Riding home she sank listlessly back in the carriage with a dull throb of pain in her heart. She passed a most wretched day, full of sharpened doubts. It seemed to her that Beth lacked no charm and that no man could withstand such loveliness. Arnold's ruling passion was music, and he must love the girl for her voice alone.

She wondered if Beth cared for him. She had seen nothing in the girl's manner to indicate that she had anything more than an ordinary affection of a pupil for her teacher, but then she was young, and her innocent heart had probably not yet awakened. Edith found herself consumed with an intense curiosity to know more of Arnold's young protegee. Yielding to a sudden impulse, she sent Beth a note asking her to spend the following day with her.

Beth accepted eagerly, and, flattered by having aroused the interest of an older, more accomplished woman, she was responsive in the highest degree to Edith's advances.

In discussing a popular novel Beth naively asserted that the woman did not love the man.

"What do you know about love, Beth?" demanded Edith.

"Nothing; only from looking on. Arnold says that when I sing love songs I tear passion to tatters and that I never can express the song of the heart until I have been in love."

"They say a pupil never learns to sing until she falls in love with her teacher. Mr. Graves has taught you to sing, hasn't he?"

"Yes; he understands voice training. But I'll never learn to sing love songs if I have to fall in love with him first!"

"Do you think him so impossible then?"

"For me, yes! Arnold doesn't think of me as a person with an individuality. To him I am a voice. If I couldn't sing I'd be devoid of interest in his eyes. He regards me as a scientist does his specimens."

She paused for a reply. Receiving none, she continued:

"Did you ever hear any of his musical compositions?"

"Yes. They are exquisite."

"They have all been dainty, simple little numbers, but his last work is far different. It is classical."

"Has it been published?"

"Not yet. He has just finished it. I'll tell you what we'll do. He is coming for me tonight, you know. When we are driving this afternoon we'll stop at the house and get the score. I know where it is."

In the evening when Arnold came Beth told him that she had the manuscript of his music.

"I am not in the mood to play it tonight," he said, hesitating.

"You are not to play it," interposed Beth. "I have heard it in all its different stages of composition, and I have it at my fingers' ends."

She seated herself at the piano and commenced playing. She was not an artist in the rendering of instrumental music, but she had great power of expression and a wonderful faculty of interpreting the composer's thoughts.

There was a power and strength in the opening bars which melted into a brilliant vivacity of execution and then finally glided into soft, reflective minor strains. From this was evoked a phantasmagoria of all the human passions. Dark, fierce, turbid dreams, an impassioned recitative, a thrilling tragedy, a graceful, insinuating subtlety of thought, a song of peace, joy, sorrow—all were expressed in the tenderness of melody refined and subdued. The theme was noble, the composition strong, the emotion genuine and the intensity dramatic.

The grandeur of the work was softened and made human by an exquisitely beautiful strain that from a background of sustained harmony ever occurred.

When the last note died away there was a momentary silence like that which follows a benediction. Edith's face was ablaze with passion.

"The music divine," she said in a low tone.

Arnold rose and crossed the room, his face pale with excitement and agitation.

"Tell me," he said to Edith, and there was something in his voice that made her heart beat quickly, "what you think of it."

"It is hard to dissect such music as that," she replied softly. "There was a color tone in every note. I felt as if I were in a vast garden of flowers, overcome by a thousand scents.

Arnold looked at her curiously.

"I did not know," he said, "that you were poetic or imaginative, nor did I dream," turning to Beth, "that your fingers could be so expressive."

"I have sat in the dark many a time listening to you as you played it," she said. "I could have played it from memory without the notes. It is Arnold himself," she murmured in an aside to Edith, "Arnold as he lets no one see him. He composed it in broken fragments, one day a snatch of gay melody, then a weird little cadenza or a dainty gavot, according to his mood, but always he played a most beautiful little melody that seemed to be ever with him. The 'song of the heart, nicht wahr?' Then he blended all these compositions so skillfully that a beautiful and complete harmony resulted."

"Beth," laughed Arnold, "you are a very precocious child!"

The precocious child gave further evidence of her claim to the appellation by asserting that the music had its charms when heard at a distance in the dark.

"If you and Edith will retire to the little reading room I will play it again and convince you I am right," she said.

They acted upon her suggestion, and Beth again rendered the passionate music, smiling softly to herself.

"I fancy this time," she mused, "that Miss Wilmot will imagine herself in a garden of love instead of a garden of flowers."

When she had finished the composition her hands wandered idly over the keys in fragments of melody.

When they entered the music room Beth looked up quickly, and then, with a mischievous laugh, burst into a grand, triumphant wedding march.

There was a half whimsical, wholly loving expression in Edith's eyes as she kissed the young girl.

"You are a dear girl!" she murmured.

"And a good guesser?" she queried.

"Such a good guesser, Beth, that you shall sing at our wedding!"

The Tramp That Had to Take Water.

A locomotive when taking water from a track tank looks as if it was going through a river. The water is dashed into spray and flies out on either side like the waves before a fast boat. Trainmen tell the story of a tramp who stole a ride on the front or "dead" end platform of the baggage car of a fast train. This car was coupled to the rear end of the engine tender. It was quite a long run, without stops, and the engine took water from a track tank on the way. When the train stopped the tramp was discovered prone on the platform of the baggage car, half drowned from the water thrown back when the engine took its drink on the run.

"Here, get off!" growled the brakeman. "What are you doing there?"

"All right, boss," sputtered the tramp. "Say," he asked after a moment, "what was that river we went through awhile ago?"—From "Stories of Inventors," by Russell Doubleday.

Swords of London.

There are four swords belonging to the city of London—the sword of state borne before the lord mayor as the emblem of his civic authority (this is the sword which used to be surrendered to the sovereign at Temple Bar and when she came within the precincts of the corporation); the pearl sword, from the nature of its ornaments, which is carried before the lord mayor on all occasions of ceremony or festivity; a sword placed at the central criminal court above the lord mayor's chair; a black sword, to be used in Lent, on days of public fast and on the death of any of the royal family.

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AN ACCURSED BRIDGE.

No Wedding Party In England Will Pass Over the Structure.

Standing in the center of an open field at Hoxne, near Eye, in Suffolk, is an obelisk erected to the memory of King Edmund, who met his death there at the hands of the Danes in 870. On the site of the monument stood an oak tree, in the branches of which the king sought refuge from his foes. At nightfall he emerged from his leafy hiding place and secreted himself under a bridge which spanned a stream called the Goldbrook.

A wedding party, however, passing over the bridge in the evening, observed the king's gold spur glittering in the moonlight, and in this way his retreat became known to his enemies. He was taken back to the tree in which he had previously hidden himself and shot with arrows, and his body was afterward removed to Bury St. Edmunds and interred in the monastery there.

On Goldbrook bridge is inscribed a record of the event. Local tradition has it that many years ago the existing inscription was followed by the words, "Cursed be the wedding party that passes this bridge." No part of this anathema is now visible, but the tradition is so well known that a bridal party will take a circuitous route rather than pass over the bridge.—London Standard.

UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN.

A Scene of Wondrous Grandeur That Awes the Beholder.

Hammerfest, the most northern town of Europe, is bleak and desolate, but seen by the witch light of the midnight sun it touches the imagination more than many of the world's more favored spots, writes Jean Murray in the Four Track News. The traveler passing through Norway finds himself constantly seeking for words that will express his wonder and admiration, but when at last he stands on the North cape in the light of the midnight sun and looks out over the awful solitude he no more longs for words to express what he feels, but stands and gazes into the glorious northern light that glimmers on the glittering waves of the arctic sea, while thoughts too deep for words well up in his soul. He feels that after this hour he will have a greater reverence for this wonderful world wherein he is permitted to spend his little span of life, and that if in future years the touch of discouragement and discontent falls upon him he will remember this moment when he stood on the lonely heights of the North cape looking out over the blue Arctic into what seemed the shining dawn of eternity and feel that it is well to have lived if only for this.

TWO TRADE SECRETS.

One Is Jealously Guarded In China, the Other In Turkey.

"There are two trade secrets," said an artist, "that the outside world, it seems, will never learn. One is a Chinese secret—the making of the bright and beautiful color called vermilion or Chinese red. The other is a Turkish secret—the inlaying of the hardest steel with gold and silver.

"Among the Chinese and among the Syrians these two secrets are guarded well. Apprentices, before they are taken for either trade, must swear a strong oath to reveal nothing of what passes in the workshop. These apprentices, furthermore, must belong to families of standing, must pay a large sum by way of premium and must furnish certificates of good character and honesty.

"You have seen damascened steel, of course, and you have seen vermilion or Chinese red. Remember the next time you look at these two things that their secrets have been guarded inviolably and have been handed down faithfully from one generation to another for thousands of years.—Chicago Chronicle.

Good Enough.

"Is your name Goodenough?" asked a bill collector of a man on whom he was calling.

"It is," answered the man, with a look of surprise.

"Then I have a bill against you." And he handed him a slip of paper.

"That is not my name," said the man.

"But you said your name was Goodenough."

"So it is," said the man as he prepared to close the door. "It's good enough for me."

The Reuter's Advantages.

"If we economize," said the husband, "we will soon have a house of our own instead of having to live in rented property."

"But I'm not sure I should like that," answered the wife. "I couldn't drive nails anywhere I please in the walls or woodwork of our own house, you know."—Chicago News.

Fooled Him.

"Why am I like a pin?" asked Mr. Jones triumphantly of his wife. He expected she was going to say, "Because you are so sharp," and he was simply paralyzed when she replied:

"Because if you should get lost it wouldn't be worth while to spend time looking for you."

One of Them.

"My wife has a remarkable collection of curiosities."

"Was she collecting when she married you?"

"Yes."

"That's what I thought."

Evidence.

First Lady—Here's an article, 'Do Animals Think?' I wonder if they do? Second Lady—I've noticed that my husband gets off an occasional bright thing.—Life.

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